

Development Status of the Hawaiian Culture and Environment Speaker's Bureau Project

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INTRODUCTION

Alohal I am happy to be here today and to report on the development status of the Hawaiian Culture and Environment Speaker's Bureau project. Some of you may have heard of Alu Like and others here know me from my past positions with the University of Hawaii Environmental Center, the Governor's Office of Environmental Quality Control and/or here in this park as a seasonal park ranger working with the Youth Conservation Corps. Well, I am now with Alu Like, the premier native Hawaiian organization. As you may have wondered, they are an equal opportunity employer.

What is Alu Like? Alu Like, Inc. is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Our primary work assists native Hawaiians to become economically and socially self sufficient. Alu like is the Hawaiian word for striving or working together for the common good. We receive funding support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Administration for Native Americans. Since 1978, Alu Like has also received grantee funds from the Job Training Partnership Act formerly CETA, from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Division of Indian and Native American Programs. Other funds are derived from State matching funds, other federal grants, private foundations and individual donations. Last year we brought in to Hawaii about \$35.00 for each dollar we received locally. In addition to the central administrative unit, we operate five island centers on Kauai, O'ahu, Molokai, Maui and Hawaii. The island centers provide intake, referral and followup services for native Hawaiians, American indians and Alaskan Eleuts; technical assistance in planning; problem identification and resource identification for projects of community organizations and individuals; advocacy with agencies on blocks and gaps to services and employment and training placements, as well as assistance in job creation and business planning with potential entrepreneurs and expanding business enterprises. These services are provided at each center by two units made up of the job training and education staff and the community development staff.

Each community development unit operates under a management by objective work plan. Part of our workplan involves community education projects. At the O'ahu Island Center these projects include a video project assisted by Oceanic Cablevision, the O'ahu Island Center Lecture series, a lecture series held at the Waikiki Community Center, four community forums, (one each quarter held at five locations around O'ahu) and in cooperation with the Kamehameha Schools and Hoomana School, a Hawaiian Culture Lecture series within the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). The OCCC is a great place for speakers, not only do you receive a small honorarium, but have an attentive and captive audience.

More seriously, the recurring task of finding speakers on various aspects of Hawaiian culture and the environment of Hawaii for these community education projects has proven time consuming to say the least. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention, perhaps laziness too, at least on my part. In any case, it came to mind that a data base, residing on a micro-computer in our island center should suggest speakers for chosen topics, not us groping around. There were a few problems however. The center does not yet have its own computer and no other computerized data base completely covers the broad spectrum of possible speakers on Hawaiian culture and environment. This then was my starting point for the project back in early March.

THE HAWAIIAN CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SPEAKER'S BUREAU PROJECT

There have been several efforts in the past to document resource persons knowledgeable in Hawaiian environmental areas and put that information to good use. Several directories have been published. Examples include Environmental Concern at the University of Hawaii, A Cross-Listed Directory Of Resources, 1974, the Directory of Scientific, Engineering and Technological Resource Personnel in the State of Hawaii, the Environmental Directory Hawaii Region and the Hawaii Cultural Resource Directory 1983. These publications provide valuable information. However, they all suffer from a common problem. The fact is that no sooner is the publication distributed when it needs to be updated because of changes in the listed persons, their addresses and phone numbers and the comings and goings of organizations, especially those not part of our government bureaucracy. Updates to these listings are difficult to accomplish since the original project funding probably did not include updating the information.

My work with mini-computers in Landsat Satellite image processing and geographic information systems and more recently with micro-computers has convinced me of their usefulness in maintaining and manipulating the information I need to carry on my work. Buckminster Fuller often used the term, "do more with less." That is exactly what micros are doing with their small chips providing rapidly growing computing power. A micro-computer, such as an Apple Lisa 2 which I would like to get for this project, can maintain and process a large data base using a store bought data base program. Of course, the key element is still some person or organization willing to collect, organize, input and utilize the data that is willingly provided by others.

Elements of the speaker's bureau project include:

1. the solicitation and acquisition of funding, hardware, supplies and manpower;

2. the selection of a useful data base program based on the project's objectives, data handling and reporting needs;
3. the coordination of and help from other persons and organizations;
4. the use of the data as an information source to support our in-house efforts; and,
5. exploration of the feasibility of expanding the project to support self-sufficiency projects of the island center that serves the entire community and its visitors.

I will briefly touch on where we are now with the project and bring up some further thoughts. In late March, I sent out fifty-three (53) letters to mainland environmental education organizations which might be willing to support the project. I used a word processor at Alu Like's central office for this task. We have received twenty-seven (27) responses to the mailout, including one small donation. Unfortunately, almost all the organizations stated they did not have funds to donate even though they thought the project idea was a good one. I also requested and received information about their organizations. In addition to myself, we envision one or more part-timers to collect, input and utilize the data for our in-house needs and outside requests. This part-timer could possibly be an Alu Like work experience person or, perhaps a student intern from the University willing to work for credits, not cash.

The selection of a useful data base program will wait until the specific hardware has been identified. I believe we will need a program that is quite versatile and can handle a growing amount of data without bogging down. If no donated equipment or funding pops up soon, I will select a data base program that can run on my own Apple Macintosh computer to keep things moving.

We have also mailed out a project fact sheet to some organizations and individuals in Hawaii that briefly details the project and seeks their support. Of note, we have received strong support from the B.P. Bishop Museum, the City and County of Honolulu-Department of Parks and Recreation - Hawaiiana programs, the University of Hawaii Environmental Center, Kamehameha Schools and the Conservation Council for Hawaii. As you can guess, none of the above have large amounts of cash sitting around and their support will be primarily through their information resources and existing networks. We have a growing list of people and organizations to contact and will be doing so in the near future. Before I go any further, I would like to invite all of you to share your expertise and information with us on this project.

Our use of the collected data, of course, will have to wait until we get the above items taken care of. Until then, don't be surprised if we call you up for a possible talk at one of our lecture series. Our immediate goal is to set up the system this summer, choose what topics we want to gather information on in close coordination with other individuals and organizations, collect it and then put it to use. Our goal is to provide information to other organizations in Hawaii and those out-of-state persons and organizations. This could also include connecting resource persons with these organizations. The long range vision we presently have for the project is its role in helping our island center become a more self-sufficient operation, especially in light of potential cutbacks in federal funds.

A personal vision of mine is to use the capabilities of the computer and the information to

support further networking of the persons and organizations concerned with the preservation, study and education of others of Hawaiian culture and the conservation and wise use of Hawaii's unique environment. There has been an artificial division between those interested in preserving Hawaiian culture and the environmental organizations seeking conservation of Hawaii's resources. To me, they are both focused, in part, on a similar goal, since the Hawaiians were close to their environment. Their survival depended on it. A linkage has to be made between the two. You can call the Hawaiian Culture and Environment Speaker's Bureau Project the development of the hub of the wheel upon which synergistic projects will hopefully grow outward. We all know how badly our children, the general public, and especially the decision-makers need to be educated on the uniqueness of Hawaii, its resources, and the culture of the original native Hawaiians who were more environmentally aware than most of today's residents and visitors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I have one recommendation to offer and that is the saying provided to us by noted Hawaiian scholar, Mary Kawena Pukui, E alu like mai kākou, e nā 'oiwi o Hawai'i. Let us work together, natives of Hawai'i. Mahalo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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